

AN INTERNET TO THE HOGAN INITIATIVE (ITTH) **MEDIA RELEASE**

Navajo Nation Tribal Councilman Continues a Trail Blazing Initiative to End the Digital Divide in New Mexico

*Highspeed Internet and Digital Television moves forward for
families in Northwestern New Mexico and the Navajo Nation*

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For Immediate Release

April 7, 2007

TECHNOLOGY TRAILBLAZING CONTINUES

After serving the state of New Mexico for fifteen years, Senator Leonard Tsosie began his duties as Navajo Nation Tribal Councilman the first week of February. Like his state senatorial record reflects, he doesn't waste any time getting down to business.

In a recent *Gallup Independent* article, Leonard Tsosie is shown intently working on his wireless laptop computer during one of his first Navajo Nation Tribal Council meetings. His laptop has traveled with him across the State of New Mexico, a resource he uses to access the Internet, communicate with constituents, research and keep up on news -- like everyone else. But as a technological leader, Leonard Tsosie uses it for another purpose. Holding it up in meetings with Governor Bill Richardson and presidents of technology companies, he said with vision in his eyes, "Just think -- if Navajo, Anglo and Hispanic children who live in rural areas of the state had wireless laptops, how much better they would do in school and in life."

“When Leonard Tsosie first ran for a New Mexico State Senate seat in the early 1990s he had a plan, a vision and a determination to make a difference in New Mexico tribal communities,” Jeanne Whitehorse, the New Mexico Tribal Librarian at Crownpoint recalled. One of his first technology efforts as a New Mexico State Senator supported Tribal Library programs. Today, New Mexico Tribal Libraries offer Internet and technology support in Native American communities across New Mexico. For many communities it is their only access to digital resources. “He is a leader when it comes to technology initiatives. We can do so much more now. I think he saw that coming a long time ago,” she said.

WIRING NORTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO AND THE NAVAJO NATION

In his newly elected position as Council Delegate for the Navajo Nation representing Torreon, Whitehorse and Crownpoint, Tsosie sees much more coming in the way of technology for his people. He envisions chapter houses, schools, homes and hogans (traditional Navajo dwellings) connected to the Internet with high speed capability. Through an effort known as the *Internet to the Hogan Initiative (ITTH)*, Navajo Technical College (NTC) and the Navajo Nation Department of Information Technology (NNDIT) are building a robust, redundant wireless system to bridge one of the largest digital divides in the country. The ITTH initiative also includes the development of digital television services, which are being planned and engineered by the Ramah Navajo School Board, KNME-TV and Navajo Nation Broadcast Services.

Leonard Tsosie accelerated these efforts by convening a series of community meetings throughout 2005 and 2006 with scientists, engineers, educators, phone company owners, television producers and Navajo language speakers who came together to share plans, resources and technical knowledge.

The Internet to the Hogan meetings brought together the best minds in education and technology across the state and the country.

“We would not be where we are in the development of a Navajo Nation wireless grid without Leonard Tsosie’s ability to bring technology experts together. I give him credit for moving the effort forward. He is a leader who took the challenge and believed in Navajo Technical College, Navajo Nation Department of Information Technology and the Internet to the Hogan group,” Dr. Elmer Guy, the President of Navajo Technical College (NTC) said. NTC is a tribal college located in Crownpoint, New Mexico where the wireless grid for the Navajo Nation is being developed and tested.

The Internet to the Hogan meeting participants came from Cellular One, KNME-TV, KTDB-FM, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratories, National Network of Digital Schools, Navajo Nation Department of Information Technology, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, Navajo Nation Public Regulatory Commission, Navajo Technical College, New Mexico State Library, New Mexico Telehealth Alliance, New Mexico Tribal Library Program, Nizhoni Smiles, Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc., Sacred Wind Communication, Inc., UNM Center for Native American Health, UNM Center for Telehealth, UNM College of Education’s Institute for American Indian Education, UNM Extended University, UNM Information Technology Services and the State of New Mexico education and technology departments, to name a few of the participants. **(A full list of ITTH meeting participants can be found below.)**

Dr. Guy also acknowledged the contributions of experts, such as Hans-Werner Braun from the University of San Diego Supercomputing Center and fellow scientists from the University of New Mexico Center for High Performance Computing. Their participation facilitated involvement in resources like the TeraGrid, a network that integrates high-performance computers, data resources to high-end facilities around the country; and the HPWREN project which provides high-speed Internet access to scientific experts in geophysics, astronomy and ecology.

“We are very encouraged and happy with their involvement,” he said.

Leonard Tsosie was also encouraged as experts in the field of technology came to the Internet to the Hogan table from across the state and the country during the past two years, “This is one of the last digital divides in New Mexico and it will take this kind of a cooperative effort to make sure we don’t leave any families behind.”

The families he talks about are mostly Navajo families living in the mountainous terrain of Northwestern New Mexico. The rugged terrain has made it difficult for even phone connectivity, Internet access and electrical lines. Connecting hogans and other homes in Northwestern New Mexico with wireless technology has not been an easy task. Phone and cell companies can not make a return on their investment to the limited customer base. And, the job presents additional challenges of state and tribal right of ways.

But, with technology advances, things that were not possible a few years ago are more than possible now, something Leonard Tsosie may have seen coming a long time ago too. Harold Skow, the Director of the Navajo Nation’s Department of Information Technology described the cutting edge developments.

NAVAJO TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND NAVAJO NATION DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RECEIVE AN AWARD FOR CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY

“We are building out the broadband infrastructure with fiber optic, communication towers, wireless Motorola canopy, microwave and wireless access points. The network will create a redundant path that will provide a fail-safe communication network,” Skow said.

Navajo Technical College and Navajo Nation Department of Information Technology recently secured national recognition for its technology planning at the Government Information Technology Executive Council (GITEC) conference in Orlando, Florida this past March. Accepting a ***Project Management Excellence Award***

for the ITTH project, Skow noted, “It is rewarding that the GITEC honored the *Internet to the Hogan* effort. GITEC chooses only six major governmental projects a year. Senator Tsosie's vision and the *Internet to the Hogan Initiative* made this possible. Because of the concerted work and support of all involved, Navajo Nation citizens will no longer be on the wayside of digital technology.”

MEETING HEALTH AND EDUCATION NEEDS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

The *Internet to the Hogan Initiative* creates the capability of delivering real time information to Navajo communities and ranching families living in remote areas of the Southwest. The Internet will provide seniors with health information and access to doctors, while school children will be able to access homework assignments so they don't fall behind in school. “It is the beginning of the end of the digital divide,” Skow said.

Through the *Internet to the Hogan Initiative* – once completion funds are secured for the wireless system - UNM'S Center for Telehealth will provide medical information and services, the state Tribal Libraries program will offer access to Navajo language materials, the Ramah Navajo School Board will broadcast bilingual content on digital channels, the University of New Mexico's Institute for American Indian Education will recruit Native American students into teaching and provide E-mentorship opportunities -- to name just a few of the resources that will be available through the system.

The initiative has even more of an impact, according to Leonard Tsosie. “The process of what we have done here is a model for other tribes and rural communities. It is what they refer to as best practices because it worked. We had a common need, a group of passionate people who wanted to make a difference, diverse resources, and the best minds in technology who came together. We had quarterly meetings where any of the entities could bring up and discuss new ideas and new technologies. We began this effort talking about dial up, then it went to T1 lines, then to wireless canopies and eventually we will move on to fiber networks,” Tsosie explained.

ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS COMPLETING THE WIRELESS BACKBONE

To insure continuity of the effort, as he transitioned to the Navajo Nation Tribal Council this past February, Navajo Nation Tribal Council Delegate Tsosie met with Senator Lynda Lovejoy during the 48th session of the New Mexico state legislature. Senator Lovejoy was recently appointed by Governor Richardson to represent New Mexico State District 22. Also a statewide leader and a member of the Navajo Nation, Senator Lovejoy supported the effort wholeheartedly by sponsoring both appropriation and capitol outlay bills.

“I am very grateful. She is quite knowledgeable about higher education and I have no doubt that she will continue to support the effort,” NTC’s Dr. Elmer Guy noted.

During the recent state of New Mexico legislative session, Senator Lovejoy’s Internet to the Hogan legislation was funded at \$550,000. Governor Bill Richardson also indicated his support for the project during both the 47th and 48th state legislative sessions.

THE NEXT STEP - NAVAJO LANGUAGE ONLINE CONTENT

“Once the wireless network and the digital television system are completed, then other things will fall into place. The second phase of the *Internet to the Hogan Initiative* will focus on content in the Navajo language. It is about time that our Navajo grandmothers and grandfathers receive information in their home language.” Tsosie said.

“It is like a weaving, now that we have started, we are not going to stop until the rug is finished and the rug is intricately designed from all directions and in the Navajo language. I have always envisioned a Navajo-like ‘Big Bird’ who could teach our children the Navajo language, as well as, English.”

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE INTERNET TO THE HOGANS

Representing the communities of Whitehorse Lake, Pueblo Pintado and Torreon, Tsosie will convene his first *Internet to the Hogan Initiative* meeting as Navajo Nation Council Delegate on **Friday, May 18, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.** at the Ramah Navajo School in Pinehill, New Mexico. The meeting will conclude at 4:00 p.m.

“We will come back together as a group at Ramah Navajo to acknowledge all of the participants’ efforts of the *Internet to the Hogan Initiative*. A’he’hee,” he says, Thank you!”

The ITTH meeting at Ramah Navajo School Board will unveil the first broadcast of local digital content on the Navajo Nation.

As part of the Internet to the Hogan’s Initiative, the newly constructed Ramah Navajo School Board’s television station will have the capability of broadcasting locally produced content in both the Navajo and English languages on a digital channel.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie, Bernie Bustos, the Division Director of Community Service for the Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc., Jim Gale the Chief Engineer for KNME-TV and members of Navajo Nation Broadcast Service will be present to talk about the potential of Navajo Nation DTV.



INTERNET TO THE HOGAN INITIATIVE MEETING
PARTICIPANTS*

NAVAJO TECHNICAL COLLEGE
NAVAJO NATION DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

&

In alphabetical order

CELLULAR ONE

CISCO SYSTEMS

DINE COLLEGE

EDUCATIONAL FUNDING GROUP

EDGENET TECHNOLOGIES

GALLUP-MCKINLEY COUNTY SCHOOLS

HANS-WERNER BRAUN

IBM

INTERNETWORK EXPERTS

KNME-TV

KTDB-FM RAMAH NAVAJO SCHOOL BOARD

LAWRENCE LIVERMORE NATIONAL LABORATORY

LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

NATIONAL NETWORK OF DIGITAL SCHOOLS

NATIVE AMERICAN TELEVISION NETWORK

NAVAJO EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONSORTIUM

NAVAJO NATION BROADCAST SERVICES, NNTV5

NAVAJO NATION DEPARTMENT OF DINE EDUCATION

NAVAJO NATION DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NAVAJO NATION INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

NAVAJO NATION SMITH LAKE CHAPTER

NAVAJO NATION WHITE ROCK CHAPTER

NAVAJO SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION

NAVAJO NATION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

NAVAJO TELECOMMUNICATION REGULATORY COMMISSION

NEW MEXICO INDIAN EDUCATION DIVISION

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

NEW MEXICO STATE LIBRARY

NEW MEXICO TRIBAL LIBRARIES PROGRAM

NIZHONI SMILES

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

SACRED WIND COMMUNICATION, INC.

SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES

UNM CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH

UNM CENTER FOR TELEHEALTH

UNM EXTENDED UNIVERSITY

UNM GALLUP BRANCH

UNM INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

UNM INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

**UNM CENTER FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE COMPUTING
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO SUPER COMPUTING CENTER**

*Internet to the Hogan meeting participants have demonstrated a
genuine and concerted commitment to ending the digital divide in New Mexico*

(ITTHMediaReleaseApril707FINAL)